

# Via Pacis

Vol. 8, No. 4

by Bob James, Jeff Stack and  
Kris Wolfe

## Sac Fest 7

On Aug. 6, 1945, a United States bomber flew over the island of Japan on a mission that ushered in the nuclear age. That mission for the crew of the Enola Gay: to drop an atomic bomb on the city of Hiroshima.

Exactly 39 years later, another group of U.S. citizens, the SAC Fest Seven, set forth a mission to an island in Omaha. Our mission: to declare an island, centered in the recreational lake of the Strategic Air Command Hdqts.—a nuclear-free zone, and occupy it as long as possible.

The day before, a total of 146 people, including a family of eight, allegedly entered the Air Force base illegally. About 300 people from 22 cities in eight states participated in this year's demonstration.

Those actions included the pouring of blood on a globe representing the blood which protestors said would be shed in a nuclear war, and a mock mass to "our Bomb who Art in Heaven," recalling the military's apparent worship of gods of metal.

That SAC Command coordinates all targeting of land-based missiles and by bombers carrying nuclear payloads.

For 45 minutes, we held the island. The island, about 35 feet in diameter, was reached after a 150-yard swim near 8 a.m. on Aug. 6. Banners hung on already standing fenceposts, declared "Nuclear Free Zone" and "No More Hiroshimas. The latter was unfurled about 3:15, the time the bomb detonated in the city. We then planted corn, Swiss chard and mustard green seeds as symbols of life, maturation and hope.

Our media statement declared, "this island to be forever nuclear-free, devoid of any nuclear weapons, nuclear waste and nuclear-power plants." Like the Aug. 5 protestors, all of us were detained and given ban-and-bar letters, ordering us not to reenter SAC's Offutt Air Force Base.

August/  
September

1984

The SAC Fest 7 are: Steve Jacobs and Bob James of Columbia, Mo., Jerry Mehalovich, Cedar Rapids, Ia., Bernie Prokop and Mike Sprong of Des Moines, Rebecca Rosenbaum, Iowa City, Ia., and Jeff Stack, Williamsburg, Ia. All but James are repeat offenders and thus face a greater chance of being prosecuted.

And what was gained? Mehalovich quips, "We've succeeded in making another blow against the Empire (of the U.S.)." Perhaps the ante-- of risk and authority's response-- has been upped now as well. Base personnel were not forewarned of the peace assault, indicating a possible drop in cooperation with authorities as the arms race maintains its feverish pace. Still, the action was non-violent, conversation with base security was cordial.

The Jewish holy day of Tisha B'av, which fell on Aug. 6 this year, was also recalled. Like the Hiroshima anniversary, it is a day of mourning, but for the destruction of Jerusalem's temple nearly 3000 years ago. What remains is a passionate memory of it the "Wailing Wall."

"Both Jewish and Japanese people were among those killed in the last World War," our statement pointed out. "No more Hiroshimas, no more Holocausts, no more Nagasakis," it continued.

The only filming of the episode was done unfortunately by SAC personnel. The near-sinking of a base-rented pontoon, used to transport us off the island, was among the events shot. A few of us voiced concern about overcrowding the boat, especially after citing a tag on the steering column, setting the carrying capacity for the boat at 1100 pounds.

Still, a half dozen stocky security guards insisted on accompanying us in the pontoon. Halfway back to shore, the boat began to sink two feet below the surface. After we redistributed ourselves, it came back to the surface. Fortunately, no one was hurt.

Much appreciated support was provided by Lana Jacobs, Columbia, Frank Cordaro, Corning, Ia., Kris Wolfe, Laurie and Beth Preheim, all of Des Moines, and Daryl Heller, Kansas City.

### Notes from Support-- Kris Wolfe

My role was to take pictures. However one roll of film was confiscated, while the first I shot wasn't, only because I left the completed roll in Frank's car. These were pictures only of the swim. The roll confiscated featured pictures of the actual occupation.

Later, I went to make copies of the press statement. Three copy shops were closed so I decided to go to the SAC base. At the main gate I told the guard what I needed.

He took my name, ran on check on me, then issued a visitors' pass, allowing me to make the copies. After talking with TV reporters, the released demonstrators joined us at communications center, a local restaurant, for victory coffee or other beverage. We had taken the island.

# Simon, Do You Love Me?

by Carmen Trotta

"Historical Christianity has grown cold and intolerably prosaic. Its activity consists mainly in adapting itself to the bourgeois habits and patterns of life. But Christ came to send heavenly fire on Earth . . . that fire will not be kindled until the fire of man is set ablaze."

Nicholas Berdyaev

Well over a century ago Karl Marx proclaimed religion "the opiate of the people," that is the supreme sanctifier of an unjust social order, that which numbs the sensitivity of our minds and hearts to the sufferings of our fellow human beings. To children of the Judeo-Christian God these are perhaps the most painful words ever spoken. Painful because of their truth. Or more precisely, painful because we have yet to prove their falsity.

As people of faith, we at the Catholic Worker know that the words of the prophets and the Gospel message contain, not opium, but dynamite. However, we also know that while "the spirit is forever willing, the body is weak." Our human frailty has caused us to compromise the Gospel to the point where it has become unrecognizable. With Peter Maurin, we recognize that the institutional church has taken the dynamite of the Christian message, "wrapped it up in a nice phrasology, sealed it in a hermetic container, and sat on the lid." Along with Peter, we are committed to "blowing the dynamite" of the church. Thus, as Job sitting in mental anguish before his numb, insensitive friends we beg you to stop your excuses, "your patchwork of lies" and "listen." Or again, as Christ we plead "if you have ears to hear then hear."

The dynamite of the Christian message is most briefly summed up in Christ's command that we love one another. This "love" that Christ spoke of and exemplified calls for compassion, understanding and a very personal commitment to serve other human beings. It is the dynamite contained not in

the "large sums" given by the "rich people," but in the "two small coins" of personal sacrifice given by the poor widow (Mark 12:41-44). Posed against the rigid, legalistic religion of his day, Christ issued a call to a truly heartfelt commitment. Posed against the desire for a quick fix, a political messiah--the kingdom seized by coercion and violence--Christ's call was to initiate the Kingship of God through a love harsh and dreadful, a love of enemies and persecutors. It was a call to radicalism, to being in this world but not of it. It is a call that for twenty centuries has gone largely unheeded.

You have only to look before you to realize how far removed we are from anything that remotely resembles Judeo-Christianity. We live in a society that is enmeshed in self-interest, ultimately concerned with materialistic well-being--a society that judges success by the type of car one drives, the size of one's house, the style of one's dress, or most immediately,

the size of one's billfold. It is also a society that seeks to maintain its equilibrium, and thus deals with any disturbances rationally, bureaucratically, dispassionately--numbly. However, all of this is a direct denial of Christian discipleship. In our craving for the goods of this world, material goods, we deny our professed love for other human beings. We stockpile our wealth at the expense of the thousands who die each day of starvation and the millions who daily suffer the pangs of hunger, homelessness, nakedness etc. Our society, ten percent of the world's population, persists in calling itself a Judeo-Christian society, while it consumes sixty percent of the world's consumable resources each year. The contradiction is irreconcileable. Only numbed hearts could fail to perceive it.

Unfortunately, despite an occasional King or Berrigan, the institutional church fails to awaken its people. Rather, through absurd imitation, it sanctifies the social order, leading its people, in their numb stupor, towards death. Just look! Our huge stone structures with stained glass windows, marble columns and alters, cushioned pews, P.A. systems--and perhaps the ultimate absurdity--Christ in a gold cup. The wealth is of course matched by a bureaucracy. Remember? Catechism, grades one through three, then Holy Communion. Then catechism once a week, grades three through six. Memorize the Our Father, Hail Mary, Apostle's Creed, Ten Commandments, seven sacraments, nine beatitudes--take a written test-puff! a confirmed Christian, just in time for Junior High School. Then faith becomes a simpler thing, confined to a brief hour each Sunday and some "holy days of obligation." Here we bow briefly before Christ, dressed in our "Sunday best" of course. We contribute our nickels and dimes, occasionally a few bills, to the collection plates, some of which will support the church infrastructure, the final portion will be given as our "gift of love" to the poor.

Numbly we walk on. For in truth all this wealth is sinful before Christ. Our bureaucratically confirmed Christian has no heart-felt commitment. Our "gifts of love" are a lie. They are symptomatic of our indifference to the poor. They are a direct denial of true love, true caring. At best we give the poor the burden of our dated, "out of style", used clothes. All to the greater glory of God? Hardly. Perhaps it serves to ease the consciences a bit, but it has little or nothing to do with love, and thus little or nothing to do with Jesus Christ.

Christ called us to enter a new family in which God, the creator of the universe, became "Abba"--Daddy, and humankind, black or white, Jew or Gentile, young or old, became brother and sister. Thus perhaps our societies most devious denial of Christ's call to love one another is our wholesale sell out of responsibility for the poor to the state. Allowing ourselves to believe that our tax dollars can do what Christ asked us to do, we send the poor to face that bureaucratic monster called "social services." There, after being degraded and dehumanized in the process of "proving their need", they may be given some

help in sustaining their poverty. No comfort, no understanding--no love. The state can provide loving, personal care, only as well as it can "visit the prisoner"--that is, it cannot!

All Christians are called to a personal, loving, genuine commitment to the poor. Yet our collection plates keep us at arms length from them, our mission houses keep them hidden away so as not to intrude upon our consciences. To a God that demands our hearts, our souls and our minds we have given a portion of our paychecks. Again the institutional church goes beyond a deafening silence to painful imitation. It issues no call to personal commitment, rather it sets up "Catholic Social Services" or "Lutheran Social Services"--and the numb march towards death continues.

It seems that both our society and our church have denied the central tenet of Christianity, the dynamite of the gospel-Love. Christ taught that love breeds love, bears fruit a hundred-fold; as the mustard seed, grows from humble beginnings to dominance. Instead it seems that the church has accepted the secular messianism of the state. As the rest of our society, it has accepted the myth that the United States is the "new Israel" with a "Manifest Destiny" to bring about the kingdom of God on earth. Thus the flag now holds a prominent place on many altars. In fact, on July 4, the Roman Catholic Church committed what was possibly the single greatest act of idolatry since the Israelites bowed to the Golden Calf, by including the Pledge of Allegiance in a special mass celebrating the birthdate of a nation-state. Oddly, as if by divine irony, on the preceding page in the missalette was the lay-out of the mass in commemoration of Saints Peter and Paul. Two men who were executed by Caesar for belonging to a community that refused to give its allegiance to any but Christ.

Even without the undeniable knowledge that American foreign policy is exploitive and self-interested, secular messianism is something the churches simply must reject. It is the third great temptation--the one Jesus most powerfully condemns. (Mt. 4:9-10) It is totally in opposition to the Christian belief in the power of love, for the only methods the nation-state can use to bring about fundamental change are those of coercion and force. And the changes brought about by such action are all so fleeting. In two thousand years hundreds of kingdoms have risen and fallen. A new order simply replaces the old order. The new order being no more just, no more righteous than the old. In two thousand years all the various forms of secular messianism have brought us no closer to true peace, human harmony. Instead, today the earth teeters on the brink of self-annihilation. For as love breeds love, so violence breeds further violence--"those who live by the sword shall die by the sword"--no idle prophecy. If the fires of a nuclear holocaust begin tomorrow, surely some fool will ask, "Where is God?" The wise will ask, "Where was humanity?"

Simon, why have you persisted to think as man thinks and not as God thinks? (Mk 8:33) Simon, if you love me then force my sheep to vomit up the opiate you have fed them, shake them from their numb stupor, and nourish them again with the bread of life. (Jn. 21:15-17)

# Announcements

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

August 4-5 S.A.C. Action  
Omaha, NE  
August 24 8th Anniversary  
Bishop Dingman,  
celebrant. Party  
will follow.  
Don't miss this!  
September 28  
Frank Cordaro will  
present a round-  
table discussion on  
Friendly Fascism

Students Encouraging Nonviolent Solutions Everyplace (SENSE) as part of Mobilization for Survival's PEACE - NOT WAR - IN '84 actions is planning a nonviolent action at the Strategic Air Command Headquarters in Omaha, Nebraska, on September 22. The action has three basic demands: Reverse the Nuclear Buildup; Stop Intervention in the Third World; Redirect Military Spending to Assure Jobs, Education, Housing, Food and Healthcare. For more information, contact: SENSE, c/o United Ministries Center, Drake University, Des Moines, IA, 50311.

## A Note from the Farm

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your support and prayers. Our gardens are growing very well. We have shipped some produce to the Worker Houses in Des Moines and Cedar Rapids. We are busy freezing and canning the produce we gather daily. We need volunteers to help transport the produce around Iowa, mainly to Waterloo, Dubuque, Des Moines and Sioux City. We are willing to meet any volunteers half way.

We are also giving hospitality to a family for one month and an occasional transient overnight guest.

We are still in desperate need of a telephone. Any donations to this cause would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you & God Bless  
The Dorothy Day Farm  
Community  
R.R. 1 Box 40  
Williamsburg, Iowa  
53261

## ANNOUNCEMENT

A HARVEST OF SHAME, a campaign of civil disobedience at the White House, commencing October 1. and continuing daily through November 2. Saturday, November 3rd, there will be a final act of massive resistance to complete the witness at the White House. The event is sponsored by the Community for Creative Non-violence which will provide food, housing, and legal assistance and representation.

For information on any group from Des Moines who may be participating in this action, please call the Worker.

## ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL!

The Des Moines Catholic Worker Community will celebrate its 8th Anniversary with a liturgy and party on August 24th. Our celebrant will be Bishop Dingman. We beg you to please bring food for our pantry when you come. Mass will begin at 7:30 p.m. and the party will immediately follow. We have a lot to give thanks for, please join us in our celebration!

## Appeal\*

Our truck is in the shop again. The water bill from over thirty guests a night has us wondering. Our pantry is tremendously low. Our needs are the following:

### FOOD

canned vegetables  
meat  
pasta  
bread  
soups  
cereals

Cleaning supplies  
scouring powders  
disinfecting soaps  
like Lysol  
garbage bags!!!!

### Personal items

bath soap  
disposable razors  
shampoo  
tooth brushes

### & MONEY



VIA PACIS is published every two months by the Des Moines Catholic Worker, Box 4551, Des Moines, IA 50306. Telephone 515-243-0765 or 243-7471. We maintain Lazarus House of Hospitality at 1317 8th St., a temporary shelter for women, couples, and families, and Monsignor Ligutti Library and Peace and Justice Center at 1301 8th St. The members of our community are:

Carmen Trotta  
Malissa Dennis  
Cindy Blake  
Kris Wolffe  
Norman Searah  
Jim Harrington  
Donna Henderson  
Maggie Olson  
Scottie Palmer  
Steve Dennis  
Patti McKee  
Mike Sprong

Des Moines Fourth Annual Women Take Back the Night March and Rally will occur on September 22, at 7:30 p.m., at Nollan Plaza. Special attention will be given to commemorating the Tenth Anniversary of the Polk County Rape-Sexual Assault Care Center and to showing the connection between pornography and violence against women. Women, men, and children are encouraged to come to express their support for women taking control of their bodies and lives as well as sharing their anger towards violence against women.

# Reflections from the Living Room

by Donna Henderson

Lazarus House has been host to nearly thirty-five guests per night for the last month. The ramifications of having such a large number of guests are many, but I would like to share a few of the things that go on during the "vacation season" at the Catholic Worker.

During the summer, we see more families than at any other time of the year. They are not vacationing. Many of them have had jobs within the last four years, but lost them in the hard times. Their unemployment benefits ran out. Thus, without the strictures of job search reports, they had no reason to limit their search to one town. Everything they own stashed in the family car, they set out to find work. The car may have been their home for many a night.

The children thrill at meeting new friends at the house. Evidence of their presence is spread from the front living room into the front yard. Toys--mostly broken--strewn from one end of the house to the other. The children play awhile, then come in for a drink, a toy, or just a hug.

Social services calls to see if there is room for one more family. I am tempted to retort that if they would help the guests we have now we would have room. Social services, perceiving themselves as a referral agency, has filled us to the brim knowing guests can stay for seven days to try to get things together. Their policy is that they will begin to assist our guests after we kick them out. Poor people are the ping-pong balls with which social services and church and other agencies compete to see who can serve the least.

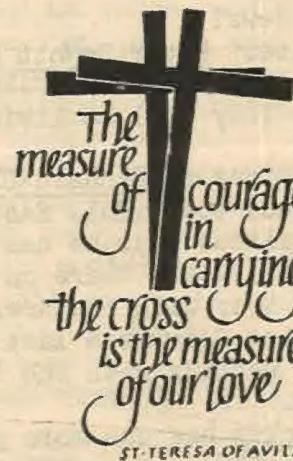
The adults are tired and frustrated. Social workers have stripped them of any dignity they might have had, transforming them from people in need of financial assistance to "truly needy." They do the dishes, share their stories and struggles and assist each other with the children. One woman with a child, seeking refuge from her abusive husband, shares the evening with a family that has been on the road for several years looking for a job that will last more than a couple of months. One couple sits at the kitchen table, their teenage daughter hanging on their shoulders between them, reading the want-ads for jobs and apartments. Another couple sits quietly in the hot, smokey living room. The uncovered bulbs in the ceiling light send their sharp rays down to a childrens book on the lap of a community member. He is surrounded by children vying for the best seat. While hearing and seeing is important, the childrens' greatest desire is for his attention.

A man from a courier service walks in bearing gifts of bread products from area grocery stores. Donuts and breakfast rolls are more common than bread unfortunately, but it is all eaten gratefully. Sometimes our diet would cause a dentist to despair, but our food supply has been so low lately that often sweets must serve as a basic

food source. There are many days when entire families come to our door and all we have to offer them is bags of donuts.

Night after night this summer, we have had every bed, every couch and all the floor space in the living rooms occupied. Some families come to us covered with mosquito bites from sleeping in their car or outside. We used to turn people away, knowing that some agency would provide them with a hotel room, but recently we have heard of people merely being turned away --not unlike Joseph and Mary in Bethlehem--without any further concern as to their well-being.

Sometimes, I question whether we are not like the mission when we merely try to provide a place to sleep and food to eat. Is this hospitality? The answer is obviously, "No, it's not!" But what is the alternative, so long as Christians refuse to accept their responsibility for and to the poor?



Recently, I heard a speaker proclaim that living a Christian lifestyle was easy, holding up the scriptures he said, "It's all here." Desiring to be polite, I held my tongue and left the crowded room. If he finds living a Christian lifestyle easy, it must be because he is not living one. As I pondered how to communicate my feelings to such people, I created this scenario:

Imagine living with Jesus, sharing your home with him. You go to work in the morning. He goes to the streets. You love him and know that he loves you, but you have to work so your lifestyle cannot change much. Besides, you like working. It's safe. You're not threatened with the people Jesus has chosen to associate with everyday. Life with Jesus is fine. You give him a few dollars occasionally, but, for the most part, he is self-supportive. He's not much trouble. He's home to share dinner with you, but doesn't get in the way when you want to go out. He's patient and gentle. You share your home with him because of who he is and he's no problem. You're comfortable.

Imagine now that things begin to change. Jesus is now a cranky old man confined to a wheelchair and in a great deal of pain. He expects you to give up your activities, maybe even work only part-time, to care for him. How can he ask you to give up your nice home for a smaller apartment?

Jesus is now in prison for speaking out against the arms race, capital punishment, abortion, and conscription. He expects you to visit him, and maybe even speak out in his stead. How can he ask you to put your job in peril by speaking out on issues that are his concern?

Jesus is now a middle-aged woman whose long commitments to mental health institutions have permanently imprinted itself in her mannerisms and speech. She expects you to listen to what you consider endless dribble. She expects you to walk to the store with her and associate with her in public. How can Jesus expect you to have the patience to listen to this and to humiliate yourself to associate with her in public?

Jesus is now young, unwed, pregnant and homeless. She expects you to take her into your home because you have told her that you do not support abortion, and neither does she, but her good "Christian" parents have kicked her out and the government has no program for prenatal care. Jesus expects you to share your home with this woman, despite the fact that she will soon begin to "show" and your neighbors will talk. How can he expect you to pay the price for her mistake?

Jesus is now a dirty, crying child whose father has been out of work for years. All he has ever known is the road, being born shortly after his father was laid off. He expects you to take him in your arms and give him the hugs his frustrated parents cannot. How can he ask you to help when you feel as if you have so little to offer?

Jesus is a Central American peasant. How can he ask you to lay aside your fear of communism to help his people in their misery? Jesus is a South African miner. How can he ask you to divest yourself of the lucrative stock which pays for your families Christmas presents? Jesus is an El Salvadoran refugee. How can he expect you to break the law to give him a place to rest?

I do not find life at the Catholic Worker easy. There is joy here but the joy is in meeting the Lord in his people. Sometimes, just finding the joy is a struggle. His people are hungry, homeless and hurting. Jesus is living among you in the despised, in the poor, in the suffering, in the imprisoned. Jesus is living with you, if not in your home, maybe he or she should be.

Our 8th Year  
 A Special Thank-you  
 to all  
 Our Alumni

I can remember in one of our early anniversary issues of the Via Pacis listing all the past members of our Catholic Worker Community by heart. Sorry friends, Our family is so large that it just ain't possible anymore. What I was able to do was to make a list of community members from all the back issues of the Via Pacis. I've seen some names of folks I haven't thought of for a long time.

One of the questions people often asked me when I was at the house was "Just who joins a Catholic Worker Community?" As I looked at the list of folks, there is no telling who might join this "foolish" movement (1 Cor. 3:18). There simply is no pattern, anyone is a potential Catholic Worker. We are certainly not limited to Catholics, for there have been Christians of many faiths and Jews who have joined our ranks. We've had ex-believers and non-believers and folks who had no opinion at all. Our oldest community member was Betty Goodnough who was well over 65 when she joined us--though she never gave us her exact age. Our youngest member, Kevin Miller, was 3 at the time. We've had a doctor, a lawyer, priests, nuns, and ministers. We have had a Ph.D. person, college grads, college drop-outs, high school grads, and high school drop-outs. We have had grandmothers and grandfathers, mothers and fathers, daughters and sons. We have had folks who came from rich backgrounds and not so rich backgrounds, and we have had people who were down right poor. People with all types of employment backgrounds have lived here, skilled and unskilled, owners and workers. People have come and met their husbands and wives, while others have come to get away from their husbands and wives. We have had a good number of gay folks and straight folks, and some folks who were moving in one direction or the other. We've had folks who never touched alcohol or drugs and some who did, and some who did too much! In short anyone could become a Catholic Worker.

There are as many reasons why folks have come to the Catholic Worker Community in Des Moines as there are people on the list. Some came because of the "faith" basis for the community, others came to work with the poor, others came for the support in resistance, and still others came because they had no other place to go. No general reason can explain why one of the folks listed joined the effort--only personal reasons and that's the way it ought to be because the Catho-

lic Worker is a personalist movement. In almost every case these folks decided to join the effort because they saw for themselves others doing and being Catholic Workers. Each and every one of them brought to the effort their own gifts, talents, strengths, and weaknesses. When anyone left or when anyone joined the Community itself changed, yet it remained Catholic Worker throughout.

On behalf of all the guests who have come through the houses; on behalf of the neighborhood people whom the houses have helped through the years; on behalf of the City of Des Moines who has been blessed by your service to the poor, and on behalf of the Catholic and larger faith community in Des Moines and elsewhere who continue to experience the fruits of your faithful witness. God Bless You and Thanks! I wish to thank every one of you folks personally. I may have helped start this community back in 1976 and at times in the past the Community may have been dominated by my brand of "friendly fascism" but there is no doubt that the Catholic Worker movement in Des Moines has its own spirit deeply rooted in the larger, living movement started by Dorothy and Peter back in 1933. It has grown beyond my dreams and I am grateful to have been a part of it. A special thanks to all who are still at it and to those who will come to join the effort in years to come. Welcome to the family.

Some Alumni News!

Big Surprise! Peter DeMott was married to Ellen Grady July 14th in Ithaca, NY. They will be living at Jonah House.

Congratulations to Richard Cleaver who can now add the Middle East to the list of places that he has been. Richard spent 3 weeks there on a fact-finding tour with the American Friends Service Committee last month. He's working with the AFSC in Ann Arbor.

Jacque Dickey has one more year left at Notre Dame to complete her M.Div. degree. She will be spending most of the summer in Iowa.

Leighton Berryhill finishes her residency in medicine in June. She and her husband are expecting a child in December.

Sharon Clemens is doing well at the N.Y.C. Catholic Worker. She is yet another Des Moines grad who has moved into the big times.

Jerry Mehalovich moved to Columbia, Missouri to help Steve Andsager and the Community of the St. Francis Catholic Worker. They are about to buy a new house.

Your special prayers are asked for Benny Bliss who is suffering with terminal cancer. Benny has been an inspiration to many of us these last few months. As his body deteriorates from the disease, his spirit grows in the Lord. He is one of the major shakers and movers in getting a Third Order Franciscan chapter started in Des Moines.

As for me, I'm held up here in Corning, Iowa at St. Patrick's Church in my deaconate internship. The tempo out here in the country is much slower than I'm accustomed to, but there is a great deal to learn here. Corning is the national headquarters for the N.F.O. and I plan to learn as much as I can about rural America while I'm out here.

Hopefully, we will be able to bring you up to date on other illustrious Des Moines alumni in the issues to come. Drop me a line in Corning and let me know how you are doing. I've got plenty of time to answer your letters. But, this does not mean that I will be responsible for our ten-year anniversary gathering! No more one-man-one-rule stuff for me. I've turned over a new leaf! St. Patrick's Church P.O. Box 187 Corning, Iowa 50841

Eight Years of Catholic Worker Alumni!

Frank Cordaro--November, 1976  
 Malcolm MacKenzie--November, 1976  
 Joe DaVia--November, 1976  
 Ed Polich--January, 1977  
 Mike Smith--April, 1977  
 Ann Deitchman--June, 1977  
 Kathy Miller--June, 1977  
 Kevin Miller--June, 1977  
 Fr. John Zeitler--June, 1977  
 Jaquie Dickey--August, 1977  
 Sr. Eve Kavanaugh--August, 1977  
 Tony Caldiero--November, 1977  
 Edson Howarth--December, 1977  
 Betty Goodnough--February, 1978  
 John Smith--March, 1978  
 Nanette Droste--May, 1978  
 Karen Streng-- May, 1978  
 Tim Heller--June, 1978  
 Steve Marsden--August, 1978  
 John Walsh--October, 1978  
 Richard Cleaver--January, 1979  
 Benny Bliss--March, 1979  
 Peter DeMott--March, 1979  
 Jim Barrett--May, 1979  
 Donna Henderson--May, 1979  
 LeeAnn Irwin--May, 1979  
 Leighton Berryhill--May, 1979  
 Brent Vanderlin--October, 1979  
 Tim Brennan--October, 1979  
 Sherri Rickabaugh--October, 1979  
 Jenny Salvato--October, 1979  
 Marilyn Nevins--October, 1979  
 Gary Severin--December, 1979  
 Patience Garvey--December, 1979  
 Lydia Caros--May, 1980  
 Fr. Bert Wilwerding--May, 1980  
 Marla Baker--August, 1980  
 Randy Gieske--August, 1980  
 Walter Clark--August, 1980  
 Norman Searah--August, 1980  
 Rusty Martin--August, 1980  
 Steve Andsager--October, 1980  
 Jeff Patch--October, 1980  
 Charlie Speak--October, 1980  
 John Hutchens--December, 1980  
 Jerry Mehalovich--December, 1980  
 Wayne Zebelman--December, 1980  
 Matthew Friel--January, 1981  
 Michael Wehle--January, 1981  
 Terry Zebelman--January, 1981  
 Gary Eklund--March, 1981  
 Kristin Layng--May, 1981  
 John Shoup--May, 1981  
 Nancy LaMusga--July, 1981  
 Linda Vanderbilt--July, 1981  
 Dwayne Grady--July, 1981  
 Mauro Heck--July, 1981  
 Michael Sprong--July, 1981  
 Dottie Lynch--March, 1982  
 Deb Zunkel--May, 1982  
 Sr. Diane Hungerford--July, 1982  
 David Stein--July, 1982  
 Sharon Clemons--September, 1982  
 Patti McKee--September, 1982  
 Russ Simmons--September, 1982  
 Jim Harrington--October, 1982  
 Maggie Olson--April, 1983  
 Bernie Neidlein--April, 1983  
 Donna Henderson--May, 1983  
 Cindy Blake--October, 1983  
 Nick McNamara--October, 1983  
 Kris Wolffe--December, 1983  
 Sharon Waters--April, 1984  
 Aaron Waters--April, 1984  
 Scottie Palmer--May, 1984  
 Carmen Trutta--May 1984

# Sort of a Manifesto

In the last few years, the problem of homelessness has drawn attention such as it has not been given in a long time. Groups have arisen in many cities to do something for the homeless. These groups have started programs that make it considerably easier for a homeless person to stay alive.

Here in Chicago, where I have lived on the street since May, 11 winter shelters have been opened. I have yet to spend a winter in Chicago, so I cannot report on these shelters, except to say that in winter one is grateful for warmth. One place I know of that gives shelter year-round is the Pacific Garden Mission on South State Street. I have stayed there twice--once my blanket got wet (the old hole-in-the-plastic-bag disaster) and another time when my clothes got wet. On those nights, I was unable to sleep outside, which is my preference. On normal rainy nights, when I've kept my gear dry, I have a few favorite doorways and overhangs which shelter me.

At the Pacific Garden Mission, a crowd numbering in the hundreds gathers outside at 7 p.m. at which time it moves into a lobby of sorts and then into a chapel/auditorium. At 8 p.m., the ordeal starts. You see, the Pacific Garden Mission wants one thing from you--your soul. A procession of preachers steps up to the pulpit and exhorts you to get "saved." All you need to do, you stubborn wretch, is to "believe in" God's only begotten son, and you get to join these preachers in heaven. That's it. No more, no less. Believe in him and you're in. But, if you don't do this, if you should die tomorrow without thinking the magic thoughts, you get the "Lake of Fire" (they use this term repeatedly) for all eternity.

As soon as one preacher runs out of breath, another starts in. They have someone playing the organ and leading the captive audience in hymns. A quick perusal of the hymnal leaves no doubt as to why the term "dour" is so often used to refer to some products of the Reformation. Anyway, this harangue goes on for one solid hour. After the "service" was over, I felt I truly had a sense of what "eternity" is. I also resolved to keep my blanket and clothing dry at all cost.

About 5 a.m., they wake you up and you go down to the lobby, where the men from the Chicago Tribune are recruiting people to hawk papers on the street. They fill the trucks with men, dropping them off along a route. You can make a couple of bucks if you hustle. I did this twice, but then I made the mistake of reading a Chicago Tribune. The Tribune talks about Ronald Reagan the way the mission talks about Jesus. Make no mistake about it, the Tribune "believes in" Reagan. So I decided I could no

longer work as a newsboy, and yet another in a seemingly endless series of potential careers shot to hell, to coin a phrase.

But I digress, which comes to no surprise to avid Via Pacis readers. The issues is what is to be done about the homeless. Homelessness is a state of estrangement from the human family. One who sleeps in a shelter is still homeless. The homeless of Chicago are kept from starving or freezing to death, but the bottomless loneliness remains.

Here is a problem I see. The souplines I've been in in Chicago have gone a long way to relieving the bodily hunger, but they do little to build community. For the most part, people are lined up, herded in, urged to eat as fast as possible, and hustled back out the door. In all fairness, this is mostly due to too many people in not enough space. Nevertheless, it makes it hard to make friends to fill the emptiness in the soul. Chicago's Street people desperately need a gathering place. It is one of the things people need in order to be human.

To make things worse, and this may come as a surprise to some, there are too many volunteers working in these places. You go to the St. Francis Center on Kinzie Street (a good place, a workhorse that does much for many) and there are many priest, monks, nuns, seminarians, novices, entire high school classes, all bumping into each other serving the poor. This, I insist, is a disservice, because it does not afford the people from the soupline the chance to work. It does not give them the chance to work. It does not give them the opportunity to show their value and dignity by so much as washing their own plate. Some would not want to help but those who would have a right to. What's more, sharing work is one of the fundamental ways of starting comradeship: you wash, I dry; you sweep, I mop. But there is hope. Today, June 26th, I managed to persuade a phalanx of volunteers to give a broom to sweep up a mess under one of the tables. I felt triumphant. Good, sweet people who mean so much good, I say that if you want to serve the poor, don't come to "run" things, come and stand in line with us, eat with us, and we will do the job together.

Now, I feel a need to repeat myself: homelessness is a state of estrangement from the human family. Which comes first, the homelessness or the estrangement? Whatever the case, you are a pauper. It seems the most bizarre thing to me, that the lack of property causes a person to be thought a non-person. I have had plenty of time to contemplate this and it still baffles me. I have been awakened from contented slumber by police and security guards, in doorways and of the marble steps of monuments some times apologet-

ically and sometimes with shocking hostility, and told to move on. Why? What harm was I doing? Was I robbing someone of sleep in their bed, spoiling their dreams? What was I robbing? Was I creating an eyesore? Look at it this way: a pauper consumes far less of the world's goods and creates far less waste than a rich person and is, thus, far less to blame for the depletion of resources, and for the inequities and injustices that inspire war. A vagabond occupies only the few square feet of ground she/he lies upon, in contrast with the vast buildings, airports, pipelines, superhighways, plantations, factories, and toxic waste dumps the rich generate by their wasteful lifestyle. The answer cannot be that the street person does not "work," since it can be argued (by me anyway) that the banker and broker do not work; they merely pimp. Yet, the banker and broker are heaped with honors, and the vagabond must beg to be allowed to lay down on the grass!

In the soupline, one sometimes sees the effects of these prejudices and superstitions on their victims--the homeless. Some people abuse others, threaten them, push ahead of them in line. They put down the food and grumble at the server.

the implicit message is: "I am above this. I am not a bum like the others!" It is tragic. People like this are one of the strongest forces working against unity among street people. Sometimes I'd like to walk up to the line and say, "Hey, guys! Let's all get together and share with one another!" But for most this would imply acceptance of their hated condition, and if they cannot for the time being rise "above" this condition they can at least act as if they are above it.

So what I am advocating is a total acceptance by society at large of vagrancy and destitution as a valid and honorable lifestyle. Why not sleep in the park? Does this world not belong to everyone, not just those who are winners in the perverse game of money making?

In particular, I strongly urge young people who are not yet encumbered by family, and who are looking forward to no other future than one of shuffling money, papers, and data, for some rich pimp in some hideous glass office tower in order to earn the right to live and breathe on God's green earth to drop out immediately. (I must sadly admit that vagabonding is not yet a good option to my beloved sisters as long as the threat of rape exists.)

In short, I call for complete re-examination of values, and I invite comments.

Leave messages at:  
Chicago Catholic Worker  
4652 N. Kenmore  
Chicago, IL 60640

by David Stein

# The People vs. the Institutional Church

The following is a translation of the Pastoral Letter on Reconciliation from the Nicaraguan Bishops to their people. The Letter was not well publicized in the United States, but we felt the Letter illustrates part of the conflict between the institutional Church in Nicaragua and its people. In particular, it demonstrates a lack of sensitivity on the Bishops part to the suffering of their people under Somoza. In our next issue we will print a portion of the response of the Jesuit Delegate in Nicaragua to the Letter.

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

At this solemn Easter celebration, the ultimate expression of God's love for mankind through the redemption, we invite you to share more fully in the spiritual wealth of the Holy Year, which will be extended in Nicaragua by a special concession from Pope John Paul II until June 17, 1984, the Feast of the Holy Trinity. This extension and the urgent need in our society for sincere and brotherly reconciliation through individual conversion have moved us to send you this exhortation.

## I. Doctrinal Section

### 1. Sin, The root of all evil:

When sin came into the world, all things were changed profoundly; the soil yielded brambles; civilizations and institutions passed away; man himself rebelled against his fellow men, and the empire of tyranny and death began (cf. Gen. 3:16-19; 4:7-8).

Man, created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26) did not wish to acknowledge and glorify him; man became vain in his imagination, and his foolish heart was darkened (Rom. 1:21). There were also those who, like Satan, disguised themselves as angels of light to deceive others and lead them to perdition. (Cf. II Cor. 11:14-15). A poorly understood anthropocentrism plunged mankind into the heavy bondage of sin.

### 2. Redemption by Christ:

Christ, by his death and resurrection, has reconciled us to God, to ourselves, and to our brothers and sisters, has freed us from the bondage of sin (cf. Col. 1:20-22, Cor. 5:18), and has given His Church the mission of transmitting his message, pardon, and grace (cf. Mt. 28:18-20, Mk. 15-20(sic)). All this should be for us a call to conversion; it should be the beginning of a radical change in spirit, mind, and life (cf. John Paul II, Bull, "Open the Doors to the Redeemer," No. 5). There are three aspects to this conversion, which redeems our individual and collective lives:

- A. We must avoid personal sin, any act that disrupts our baptismal alliance with God.
- B. We must banish any sinful attitudes from our hearts, that is, any habitual rejection, whether conscious or unconscious, of Christian standards and moral values.
- C. We must put to an end such sins of society as participation in injustice and violence.

### 3. Sin after the redemption:

Nonetheless, sin has persisted in the world since our redemption by Christ, because:

- A. Man abuses his freedom and does not accept God's grace.
- B. Society has become secularized and is no longer oriented toward God; it does not heed the Church, the universal sacrament of salvation, but considers it an alienating institution.
- C. At times it claims to accept Christ and his teachings, but it repudiates the Church and thereby falls into the temptation of establishing other "churches" than the one founded by the apostles and their successors, the legitimate bishops.
- D. We forget that coexistence can only be based on an accurate perception of the individual as an intelligent, free, and religious human being, with rights and duties devolving from his very nature (cf. John XXIII, Enc. Pacem In Terris, No. 9-10).

E. Materialistic concepts of mankind distort the person and teachings of Christ, reduce man to merely physical terms without taking account of his spiritual nature, so he remains subject to physical forces called the "dialectics of history." And man, alienated from God and himself, becomes disoriented without moral and religious reference points, without a higher nature, insecure and violent.

## II. Our Situation.

### 1. The problem of sin in the world:

Pope John Paul II, in his message for the 17th World Day of Prayer for Peace on January 1, 1984, expressed his concern about the current world situation, a concern which we, too, share: "Peace is truly precarious and injustice abounds. Relentless warfare is occurring in many countries, continuing on and on despite the proliferation of deaths, mourning, and destruction, without any apparent progress toward a solution. It is often the innocent who suffer, while passions become inflamed and there is the risk that fear will lead to an extreme situation."

### 2. In Nicaragua.

#### A. Belligerent situation:

Our country, too, is plagued by a belligerent situation pitting Nicaraguan against Nicaraguan, and the consequences of this situation could not be sadder:

--many Nicaraguan youths and men are dying on the battlefields.

--many others look toward the future with the fear of seeing their own lives prematurely ended.

--a materialistic and atheistic educational system is undermining the consciences of our children.

--many families are divided by political differences.

--the suffering of mothers who have lost their children, which should merit our great respect, is instead exploited to incite hatred and feed the desire for vengeance.

--peasants and Indians, for whom the Church reserves a special love, are suffering, living in constant anxiety, and many of them are forced to abandon their homes in search of a peace and tranquility that they do not find.

--some of the mass media, using the language of hate, encourage a spirit of violence.

#### B. The Church:

One, albeit small, sector of our Church has abandoned ecclesiastical unity and surrendered to the tenets of a materialistic ideology. This sector sows confusion inside and outside Nicaragua through a campaign extolling its own ideas and defaming the legitimate pastors and the faithful who follow them. Censorship of the media makes it impossible to clarify the positions and offer other points of view.

#### 3. Foreign interference.

Foreign powers take advantage of our situation to encourage economic and ideological exploitation. They see us as support for their power without respect for our persons, our history, our culture, and our right to decide our own destiny.

Consequently, the majority of the Nicaraguan people live in fear of their present and uncertainty of their future (sic). They feel deep frustration, clamor for peace and freedom. Yet their voices are not heard, muted by belligerent propaganda on all sides.

#### 4. The root of these evils.

This situation rooted in the sin of each and every one, injustice and oppression, in exploitative greed, in political ambition and abuse of power, in disregard for moral and religious values, in lack of respect for human dignity, and forgetting, abandoning, and denying God.

### III. Response of the Church.

#### 1. Conversion and reconciliation.

The Church ardently desires and encourages peace and tranquility and believes that there is only one path to that end, conversion. This means that we must all turn our eyes and heart to God, our Father, who through Christ offers us the true path to reconciliation, forgiveness, and peace.

"It is not behavior alone that needs to be changed, but the heart that guides our lives. At the community level it is important to examine ourselves as persons, as groups and social units, not only as victims but also as authors of certain collective deviations from God's plan, in order to implement together God's plan for constructive human endeavor." (cf. Peace and Conversion, A Pontifical Document issued by the Commission on Justice and Peace at Rome on September 30, 1983.)

The entire universe is the object of redemption since it also reveals the glory of God and must be sanctified and consecrated to God (cf. Vatican II, Const. Lumen Gentium, No. 34). Christ resurrected is at the center of history and of the world, leading us toward its full maturity and its final liberation from the forces of evil (cf. Vatican II, Const. Lumen Gentium, No. 48).

#### 2. Confession: The path to conversion.

John Paul II in his address on Reform and Holiness given at Rome on November 26, 1983, said: "To assist such conversion, the Lord instituted the Sacrament of Reconciliation. In it Christ himself goes to meet the man oppressed by the awareness of his own weakness, he raises him and gives him the necessary strength to continue his path. With the sacrament the life of the resurrected Christ enters the spirit of the believer, bringing forth renewed generosity of purpose and enhance the capacity to live by the Gospel."

Jesus reconciled all things bringing peace through the cross (Col:20(sic)) and transmitted this power to his disciples (cf. Jn. 4:21, 13:34-35, 12-17(sic)).

Preparing to receive the benefits of the sacrament of confession is an important step in conversion. A sincere examination of our sins self-criticism of our attitudes and our life, these reveal to us our faults and make us abhor sin which is an offense against God, an affront to the Church, and damage and or injury (sic) to our neighbor. It encourages us to turn totally toward God and to reform our lives, it brings us back to the Church and closer to our brothers.

#### 3. Dialogue:

The road to social peace is possible through dialogue, sincere dialogue that seeks truth and goodness. "That (dialogue) must be a meaningful and generous offer of a meeting of good intentions and not a possible justification for continuing to foment dissension and violence." (John Paul II, Greeting to Nicaragua, March 4, 1983).

It is dishonest to constantly blame internal aggression and violence on foreign aggression. It is useless to blame the evil past for everything without recognizing the problems of the present.

All Nicaraguans inside and outside the country must participate in this dialogue, regardless of ideology, class, or partisan belief. Furthermore, we think that Nicaraguans who have taken up arms against the government must also participate in this dialogue. If not, there will be no possibility of a settlement, and our people, especially the poorest among them, will continue to suffer and die.

The dialogue of which we speak is not a tactical truce to strengthen positions for further struggle but a sincere effort to seek appropriate solutions to the anguish, pain, exhaustion, and fatigue of the many, many who long for peace, the many, many people who want to live, to rise from the ashes, to seek the warmth of a smile on a child's face, far from terror, in a climate of democratic harmony.

The terrible chain of reaction inherent in friend-enemy dialectics is halted by the Word of God, who demands that we love even our enemies and that we forgive them. He urges us to move from distrust, and aggressiveness to respect and harmony, in a climate conducive to true and objective deliberation on our problems and a prudent search for solutions. The solution is reconciliation. (cf. John Paul II, Peace and Reconciliation. Address by the Pope in El Salvador, March 6, 1983).

If we are not open to objective acknowledgement of our situation and the events that distress our people ideologically, politically, and militarily, then we are not prepared, in a true and Christian way, for reconciliation for the sake of the real, loving wholeness of our nation.

Considering that freedom of speech is a vital part of the dignity of a human being, and as such is indispensable to the well-being of the nation in as much as a country progress only when there is freedom to generate new ideas, the right to free expression of ones ideas must be recognized.

The great powers, which are involved in this problem for ideological or economic reasons, must leave the Nicaraguans free from coercion.

#### Conclusion.

If we want our conversion to find true expression in the life of our national community, we must strive to lead lives worthy of the Gospel (cf. Ph. 1:27, Ep. 4:1), reject all lies, all harmful or offensive words, all anger and evil utterance, and be benevolent and forgive generously as God forgave us through Christ (cf. Ep. 4:25-32, Col. 3:12-14).

It behooves us to value each life as a gift of God, help the young to find meaning and value in their lives and prepare themselves for their future roles in society, forgive enemies and adversaries, facilitate the return of those who have left their country and welcome them with open heart, free those imprisoned for ideological differences, create a climate of friendship and peace conducive to social harmony.

"In the great task of bringing peace and reconciliation to the nation, the family as the basic unit of society cannot be ignored. Nor can respect for its rights." (cf. Gaudium et Spes, N. 52, Quoted by John Paul II in his address to the bishops of El Salvador, February 24, 1984).

May the Holy Virgin who played her part in our redemption with such exemplary fortitude, provide us with the necessary strength to perform our Christian duty of love and peace. And may the Lord of Peace grant us all, always and in all our endeavors, the peace and tranquility which we seek (cf. 2 Th. 3:16).

Done at Managua, April 22, Easter Sunday, 1984 (To be read and published in the usual manner), Episcopal Conference of Nicaragua.

(Signatures of Bishops)



P.O. Box  
4551

## Selective Welcomes



Mike Colonnese

The welcome extended by the Church authorities in Costa Rica (including the extreme right-wing Archbishop of San Jose, Monsenor Roman Arrieta V.) to the 10 religious who were expelled from Nicaragua was more an act of political expediency than it was an act of Christian charity.

I am not going to enter a discussion of Church-State relationships in Nicaragua. They are more than complex, to say the least. Errors have been committed on both sides. I am not denying that there are certain members of the junta who are anti-Church and would be anti-Church even if Monsenor Romero had been the Archbishop of Managua, although they would have lived with him for purposes of political expediency. This is part of the complexity which arises in a revolutionary situation. However, I do believe that the Nicaraguan Hierarchy could have avoided much of the conflict by realizing the need accompanying the people in their revolutionary process. Having said that, we can examine, with validity, the global attitude of the hierarchy as expressed by the Archbishop of San Jose, Costa Rica, by the warm welcome he gave the expelled religious.

The entire event must be viewed within an historical perspective. So, I am forced to ask the questions: Where were the Costa Rican Church bishops when the Salvadoran priests fled persecution in El Salvador and fled to Costa Rica? I know several cases personally. Where were those bishops, notably Arrietta, when priests and religious were being persecuted in Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay, Chile, and Guatemala? I know of one priest from El Salvador who fled

to Costa Rica and the hierarchy of the capitol city would not even place him in a pastoral ministry. What makes the situation so much more suspect is that together with the Archbishop at the airport were members of the counter-revolutionary movement. A man is a man and a woman is a woman regardless of where or what they are coming from as they search for assistance. That is the Christian response.

What would happen in Chile if foreign priests engaged actively in anti-government activity? What would happen to those same priests and religious in Haiti, Brazil, and the Phillipines? Better still, what has happened to priests and religious in those countries who have made an option for the poor and oppressed? For further information write to Maryknoll or Columban religious who have had some terrible experiences in this regard in the Phillipines. What was the reaction of Monsenor Arrietta (not pious, but political) when his brother in the hierarchy, Monsenor Romero was assassinated in San Salvador?

These are the contradictions which make the "warm welcome" given to the religious in San Jose suspect and motivate me to call it a welcome of political expediency rather than one of Christian charity. The question must be asked, "Why wasn't the same 'Christian charity' not exercised in regard to the Salvadoran priests who fled to Costa Rica to 'save their lives'?"

The ugly head of the new global civil religious attitude is showing itself once again.

I cannot make a judgment on the expulsion of the religious from Nicaragua because all that is available to me, at this point, is what I have read in newspapers. They were engaged in anti-government demonstrations. They were foreigners and guests in that country. I think something has to be said about that. I will not comment on the motives of the Nicaraguan government because I do not know them. Furthermore, they are still not clear to me. But religious in other countries where rightist governments are in control have been warned by the Church authorities not to engage in political activity. Why weren't these foreign religious in Nicaragua given the same warning?

It is a question of selectivity and selectivity, as I mentioned above, cannot be motivated by Christian love. It has a political character and that expulsion will be used ad nauseam against the Sandanistas. It wouldn't be so bad if it were used against specific government people in Managua, but it will be used to discredit a revolutionary process and that is sad. +

## Community

by Donna Henderson

Just like everything else at the Catholic Worker, it is hard to keep up with the Community. In addition to the tremendous number of guests we have had lately, we have had people move in and move out, and and come home from jail and leave home for jail. The strain is felt by everyone.

Maggie Olson was released from the Douglas County (Omaha) jail in early June, after serving her sentence for witnessing at the Strategic Air Command. She will be working at an area group home for handicapped adults and living in a nearby apartment. She joins us when she is not working so she still lends a hand around the house.

Russ Simmons is now living at Hanson House of Hospitality and coming to "take the house" on Sunday mornings. We really appreciate Russ coming to help, even though Bob Cook, who was a friend of our Community, has now snatched a Community member. We love Bob anyway!

Shortly after Scottie Palmer settled in, Carmen Trotta came to join us for the summer. Carmen is a recent Grinnell graduate who came to us through an externship program. Both told us they'd only be with us for the summer, but if either one leaves we will miss them greatly. Scottie served 15 days in Scott County jail in June for his witness at the Rock Island Arsenal.

Jim Harrington has settled into a regular schedule at the house. He is "on the house" every morning Monday through Friday. Jim still helps with the repairs. He is the only one around the house who is handy, but for him the house would be kept together with bubble-gum and paper clips.

Mike Sprong just returned from visiting Kristin Layng in Kentucky. He came back with stories of poverty and devastation in Appalachia. Mike returned to face the prospect of planning for the opening of the winter shelter for the men. If you are interested in helping him out with an occasional evening, money, or blankets give him a call at the house.

Cindy Blake is still with the Community but is looking to move to Sheldon, Iowa. It will be hard to loose Cindy. She is not with us as often as we would like, but she is a joy to have her around when she can be.

Patti McKee has been busy with her job and around the house. She will be attending the Non-violence Gathering in the Black Hills.

Norman Searah has moved back home. We are glad he is back. It is like the House missed him as much we did. He is still looking for a pick-up truck. That reminds me, our pick-up, it is nearly a member of the Community, is out of commission again. This time we may have to shoot it to put us out of our misery. It is the steering column. It was so bad that by the time we got it to the shop, the mechanic was afraid to drive it into the bay. While, we knew something was wrong we had no idea that it was as serious as it was. Just another event that proves God watches after fools and Catholic Workers. Isn't that redundant?

As for myself, I am working part-time at Legal Aid. I am still not quite settled in my attempt to do as much hospitality as I would like to do, but I am working on it. Fortunately, hospitality brings me back to reality. Things have settled down a bit from this spring. I should be seeing a little bit more reality after the Via Pacis is out!

We encourage everyone to stop by and visit. We eat at noon and six and the house is open until ten. All are welcome!

# A

## Rare Bird Speaks

It is early March, the tail-end of another of Iowa's bitter winters, and I have reached the end of my rope. For a little more than a year, I have kept myself and my child alive by living on the kindness of friends and relatives, ingenuity, sheer determination, prayers, and borrowed time--mostly borrowed time. Or was the time the answer to the prayers? I'm not always sure.

The life I have been living has not been an easy one for me to bear. I'm not accustomed to living from hand-to-mouth, to having to ask others for help. I'm used to giving not taking, to thinking of others, not myself. I have been forced into this self-centered lifestyle, not by choice, but by a series of events and circumstances so bizarre so as to practically reek of divine intervention. It is as though God said, "I want you to do a certain thing, but, if I leave you where and as you are, you will not find or do the thing I wish. Therefore, I will remove you from where you are, to the place where I want you to be so that you will do and become what I desire."

So here I am. From an adequate job, to an inadequate job, to half-a-job, to almost no job at all. From an apartment, to a room with friends, to no place left to sleep but my car. Driving around on a cold March night with my little one asking, "Mama, when are we going to go home?" I have no answer. I'm not sure where home is. Maybe 300 miles away. Maybe in the back of the car. Maybe nowhere. "What do I do, God? For Tonight?"

One suggestion was given--the Catholic Worker House. A place to stay while I look for a way out of the societal "trap" that closes in on so many women these days. The trap that says, "We don't want your kind so visible. It looks bad for us if a woman can make it alone. It makes us look wrong for forcing so many divorced women into taking welfare with all its lies and hassles, and its slow, tortuous enslavement, just to keep our kids alive. We don't want to look wrong, so we can't let you escape our trap. Go on welfare, or go away. We don't want your kind around here."

The Worker knows that trap well. They don't mind helping someone out of it. They jump at the chance when they can.

"So, here I am, Lord. Just let my kid and I get a few good nights sleep. Ok? For right now, I'll settle for just that, and I'll let you find the alternatives for me to follow later. Alright? Alright." Dial the pay phone. Ring.

"Catholic Worker, this is Nick." And nothing is ever the same again. Someone cares. No one says, "So what if it is more blessed to give to receive, if you have no money you have nothing to give. Just take what is dished out to you and keep your mouth shut. Don't make waves." At the Catholic Worker, it's "So tell us what your plans are. Can we help you?" And later, it's "Oh, you want to help us? You want to do something for somebody besides yourself for awhile? So tell me, kid, what are you doing for the rest of your life?" Dorothy Day may be gone, but something of her spirit has been multiplied and lives on. The social order may yet be changeable. I'm putting my life to work to prove that it can, because I'm certain any benefit gained outweighs the risks.

It's true, I've been called a "rare bird," even an "endangered species." Both sides tend to take shots at me now and then. Some say activism of this sort is not for "my kind." (I am black.) I protest that it is for all kinds. No one group can ever hope to benefit from planetary suicide.

The other side, supposedly "my own kind," sometimes accuses me of having gone "blind," of having, like the unsuccessful leopard, to change spots. I understand their fears. It's frightening to think that any of us may be unmindful of the past, willing to forget as well as forgive. Rest assured my brothers and sisters of the flesh, that is not the case. Somethings human beings, because they are human, cannot forget. I remember. My children will remember. My childrens' children will remember. But they will also know that there is more than one human answer, and some of those answers are part of the larger divine answer: "Love those that hate you. Bless those that curse you. Do good to those that despise and misuse you. Pray

for your enemies, and, if they are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty give them drink." Don't stoop to their level. Bring them up to yours. The common level of humanity. Divinely formed in the image of the Almighty.

So what if there are risks? Who ever gained anything really worth having without taking some blows or criticism? A few consequences? I have already seen that the risks involved are not nearly comparable to the inner peace I have found, or to the joy of seeing my child growing freer, stronger, and more self-confident everyday. Others may not see such things, but to me they are a beautiful result of finally being able to follow my conscience unreservedly. Freely, I have received. Now, I freely give. And give. It is a joy.

So, finally, a "rare bird" has found a sanctuary. She has come to raise another who will one day go out and tell all the other birds what his mother has learned. The struggle is no longer a matter of division between young and old, Jew and Gentile, Catholic and Protestant, or black and white. Not here. Not in this country or any other. The true struggle has become one between rich and poor, the "haves" and the "have nots," not for the acquisition of money but for the simple right to live. All other struggles must take at least second place to that one struggle for life. We cannot afford to lose it. The future of the planet is at stake.

Meanwhile, I have found a way to fight without fighting alone, without jeopardizing my child. For this most precious gift, the gift of no longer being alone, the gift of safety and life for my little one I give thanks the only way I know how.

Yea, the sparrow hath found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young; even Thine altars, O Lord of Hosts, my King and my God!

Psalm 84:3.

by Malissa





## A Note from Our Archivist

The following is an excerpt of a letter from Phil Runkel, the Catholic Worker archivist at Marquette University, to the Internal Revenue Service.

Dear Sirs:

I can no longer in good conscience ~~willingly pay my federal income tax~~, knowing that a large portion of each tax dollar is used to support a monstrous military buildup which has vastly increased the prospects for nuclear war, given aid and comfort to cruel and unjust--if "friendly"--regimes in Latin America, and indirectly exacerbated the suffering of our nation's poor through the diversion of funds from social programs. With the Catholic Worker Movement, I see the possession of nuclear weapons, and the threat to use them, as "a denial of the right of people to life itself, and, by implication, a denial of God." With Henry David Thoreau, I believe that "If a thousand men were not to pay their tax bills this year, that would not be a violent and bloody measure, as it would be to pay them, and enable the state to commit violence and shed innocent blood."

For these reasons, I am withholding the balance due . . . and contributing it instead to the Catholic Worker Movement, whose members have a fifty-year tradition of serving the "truly needy" and working for peace, without once receiving a salary or government subsidy for so doing. I also wish to register my objection to the use of the amount previously withheld from my salary for any military purpose whatsoever.

Peace,  
Phillip M.  
Runkel

## An Early Appeal for Help

## Norman's Story

Last winter, our community and the Des Moines Coalition for the Homeless provided a shelter in the basement of Trinity United Methodist Church for about twenty homeless men. Operating a shelter in a house of worship is difficult work. It requires finding folks who will give up entire nights to stay at the shelter. It means making arrangements for the sleeping, feeding and other basic needs of those who are caught homeless during brutal Iowa winters. Running a shelter means finding volunteers who are willing to deal with emergencies such as medical problems, willing to say "no" when the shelter is full, and willing to turn away those who are drunk. Of course, running a shelter means begging enough cots and blankets and money to pay the bills.

Trinity United Methodist is the only congregation in Des Moines sheltering the homeless. Trinity is a poor, but extremely dynamic, church in the neighborhood. In addition to allowing their basement to be used as a winter shelter, they operate a food pantry and serve breakfast to approximately 200 children each morning during the school year.

Once again, this year Trinity has agreed to open their doors to the homeless. Between October 1st and May 1st, twenty men a night will call the floor of a church basement their "home." We desperately need volunteers to staff the shelter. It would also be very helpful if someone volunteered to wash our blankets and other shelter laundry.

Please consider helping in any one or more of the following ways:

overnight staff  
laundry  
blankets  
cots  
money

If you wish to help or have any questions, please contact:

Rev. Bob Cook  
(515) 279-9998  
or  
Mike Sprong  
D.M.C.W.  
(515) 243-0765

**We shall become Christians when we weep not because we have lost something but because we are given so much.**

I just got back from the farm where I've been working. I was hoping to spend the Fourth of July with a few friends who live on the streets and spending some time with the folks at the Catholic Worker, working and doing what I can to cheer people up.

While attending a meeting and seeing a movie on non-violence, I heard about the Mustard Seed burning down. It hurt me because the Mustard Seed was the first Catholic Worker that I worked at. I don't know the whole story about the fire. As I sit writing this article, I find myself recalling a lot of things that went on when I used to live in Worcester, Massachusetts.

I recall Tim who introduced the Mustard Seed to me when I was depressed. It was his way of thanking me. I recall that I got into washing dishes after I ate dinner. After awhile I got into feeling good because I got into doing a lot of other things besides washing dishes. Things like passing cigarettes to people, helping out in the clothes room, and once in a great while help out cooking a meal. When the dishes were done and the place was clean, I would sometimes spend some time with Tim, sharing a bottle or two with others in the alley behind a bar. I recall some of the church groups that brought food to feed the people that came to eat. I recall the children who came along with their parents to help feed the people and how frightened they were at first but after awhile they would somehow get into talking and listening to people. I recall Bill who lived at the house. He would get into playing the piano. Sometimes there were times when people would go upstairs to the second floor to watch TV before dinner. Sometimes someone would be asleep on his bed while others sat on his bed and watched his TV. On the third floor, there would be a few people sitting in the kitchen while someone was in the chapel praying. When I left Worcester the Mustard Seed was knocking down walls to make more room in order to feed more people.

There is a lot more to say about the Mustard Seed, and the same goes for the Catholic Worker here in Des Moines. Since I can't be here and there at the same time, I send you my prayers and share with others my memories of the Seed

Norman

P.S.

Do to the fact that things were out of control, I'm no longer at the farm. I'm back at the Worker. Working at helping people and trying to get a truck. I also just turned 34 on July 25th.

Thank You.

# To Whom Does "The Golden Rule" Apply?

by Cindy Blake

I John 2:9

Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates another is still in the dark.

I John 4:11-12, 18-21

My dear people, since God has loved us so much, we too should love one another. No one has ever seen God; but as long as we love one another God will live in us.

In love there can be no fear. Fear is driven out by perfect love: because to fear is to expect punishment, and anyone who is afraid is still imperfect in love. We are to love, then, because He loved us first. Anyone who says "I love God," and hates another, is a liar. Since anyone who does not love another who they can see cannot love God, whom they have never seen. So this is the commandment that he has given us, that anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

Matthew 5:44-45

But I (Jesus) say this to you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you; in this way you will be children of your Father in heaven, for He causes His sun to rise on bad people as well as good.

How many times have we all read this scripture? In the past I have applied these readings to my Christian brothers and sisters. As I reflect on this now, I realize that I have been extremely limited in my interpretation. I realize that these scriptures apply to the stranger as well. Even this is too exclusive. I believe that we need to expand our understanding to include nations. I believe that if we love Jesus we will obey His commandments - and he only he had two. He said first to love God with all your heart, mind and soul - and second - the law is summed up in this - love your neighbor as yourself - do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

These commandments that Jesus gave are not easy. Loving your enemies is not easy - let alone doing good to those who persecute you. Love does cast out fear. I think the key to this is - anyone who claims to love God but hates another (Jesus said is angry with another) is still in the dark. President Reagan and Senator Jepson both claim to know Jesus, both claim that Christ is their Savior and that God is first in their lives and in their decisions. I can accept (I won't say love - I really need to work on that part) - that these two men say this.

These two men imply that they read the scripture. These people may not hate the leadership of the Soviet Union; they may not hate the so-called guerrillas in Nicaragua or El Salvador: they may not hate the supposed communists in Grenada. Yet, both of these people show by their actions that they have great fear. Remember, I John 4:8, "In love (Christ) there can be no fear." By their actions-- perpetuating the arms race, invading islands, and getting involved in Lebanon, El Salvador and Nicaragua--they show they have fear and therefore not love for these nations or their people. By perpetuating the nuclear arms race they show that they don't have love for the people of this nation. If neither of these men claimed Christ, I wouldn't question their motives at all.

This is what I need, I daresay many of us need to work on, that is, having compassion and love for these men. I need to lift up these people up in prayer that God will convict their hearts. They are not obeying God's commandments that we should love one another. As I said earlier, this is not easy--especially seeing two people who are rapidly bringing the world to an end with the arms race.

However, these two people do claim Christ and therefore, as a Christian sister, I call on them to review their commitment. I call on them to begin to use their influence for the good of all people--not the good of big business.

Many Christian friends of mine have asked me to review my viewpoints, especially in regard to the arms race. These people ask me to trust that God is in control. I guess, they believe (I don't know for sure) that God will not allow us to blow ourselves up. Well, I don't believe this. God gave us free will. He would not be pleased at all if we did destroy ourselves, but He gave us that choice. I believe that God also gave us a brain and a call to do His will. I believe His will for us here is to call the world to peace.

Jesus told us very plainly what His will for us was--to show love to God, to our neighbor, to bless those who hate us, to feed, clothe and help the poor. I believe that, in any job or vocation, we need to use everything we have for the betterment of all people. If you're a lawyer, defend the poor. It's unprofitable but the love of money is the root of all evil. If you're a doctor, treat those who cannot pay just as you would those who could pay. If you're a senator, only support bills that are for the good of all people. If you're a President, use your influence for all people. I have to say that, even among Christian people, I don't see this being done. We give God one hour on Sunday and then exploit His people the rest

of the week.

May we all be open to God to convict us of our wrongdoings. May God especially convict those in positions of authority--those who can do something in a very big way about the condition of this world.

Until this happens, though, I will continue to support civil disobedience as a method to let the authorities know that not all Americans--in fact, a vast majority of Americans do not want the arms race to continue. I don't believe that God considers it sin if we don't obey the government in this.

Remember, I John 2:9, anyone who claims to be in the light but hates (or is angry, or, I say, plans to kill another in war or peace) is still in the dark.

How can we show God our love if we can't speak out against this world's corruption? How can we truly love God who we cannot see, if we cannot love our world neighbors who we can see. We cannot.

So, let us pray for God's forgiveness and His strength to love those in authority. Let's pray for them. Let us always continue to pray and ask God's guidance.

I Thessalonians 5:17

Pray without ceasing.

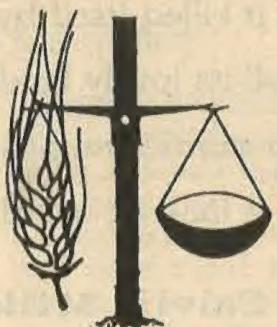
Peace,  
Cindy

In the middle of the faithless sky there hangs a small, dark world that once was green and blue.



Some say it killed itself by stabbing all its lovely lands with deep atomic wounds. Some say it took an overdose of hate.

Calvin Miller  
The Song



Via Pacis  
DMCW--/Diocese of Des Moines  
Box 4551--Box 1816  
Des Moines, IA 50306  
515-243-0765

The first man who, having enclosed a piece of ground, bethought himself of saying this is mine, and found people simple enough to believe him, was the real founder of civil society. From how many crimes, wars and murders, from how many horrors and misfortunes might not anyone have saved mankind, by pulling up the stakes, or filling up the ditch, and crying to his fellows, "Beware of listening to this imposter; you are undone if you once forget that the fruits of the earth belong to us all, and the earth itself to nobody."

(Rousseau, *A Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, 1754.)

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